

Serial No. 10/554,032

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Amendments To The Claims:

Please amend the claims as shown.

1.-12. (canceled)

13. (currently amended) A method for the automatic configuration of a communications device with a reserved identification number, wherein

at least one network node device is provided for administering a subnetwork of a network, wherein

at least one virtual network comprising at least one subnetwork is provided, wherein the communications device is assigned to the virtual network, wherein data packets exchanged within the virtual network are tagged with a VLAN identification number, the method comprising:

determining ~~of information~~ subnetwork addressing information ~~the subnetwork~~ by a network element arranged in the network,

transmitting a configuration message ~~set with the~~ subnetwork addressing information ~~addressing the subnetwork~~ from the network element to the network node device,

forwarding the configuration message from the network node device to the virtual network, wherein the configuration message is forwarded as a broadcast message tagged with the VLAN identification number,

receiving the broadcast message by the communications device, and

configuring the communications device on the basis of the VLAN identification number;

wherein on failure of the network element of the communications device a message is sent with a tag number to a second network element, and wherein

in the case of no response message being received by the second network element, the send process is repeated by the communications device with a changed tag number, and, wherein

in the case in which a response message is received by the second network element, the tag number is used as the identification number.

14. (previously presented) The method in accordance with claim 13, wherein the network node device is embodied as a router.

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15. (previously presented) The method in accordance with claim 13, wherein the information addressing the subnetwork is a directed broadcast address.

16. (previously presented) The method in accordance with claim 14, wherein the information addressing the subnetwork is a directed broadcast address.

17. (previously presented) The method in accordance with claim 13, wherein the information addressing the subnetwork is a network address and/or a network mask.

18. (previously presented) The method in accordance with claim 14, wherein the information addressing the subnetwork is a network address and/or a network mask.

19 - 24. (cancelled).

25. (previously presented) The method in accordance with claim 13, wherein the identification number is entered in a protocol header of the broadcast message in accordance with the IEEE 802.1Q Standard.

26. (previously presented) The method in accordance with claim 13, wherein the identification number is entered into a data part of the configuration message created by the network element.

27. (previously presented) The method in accordance with claim 13, wherein the configuration message is sent at intervals.

28. (cancelled).

29. (previously presented) The method in accordance with claim 13, wherein the identification number is used in the communications device for configuring a VLAN ID characterizing the virtual network.

30. (cancelled).